Winter Membership Meeting

Although the lack of a quorum kept the CTs at the Winter Membership Meeting from carrying out the business of the Union, we were able to discuss several issues.

Tough bargaining for GEU

Jacquelyn Lloyd, contract administrator for the Graduate Employees Union (GEU), addressed the group at the beginning of the meeting about how frustrating negotiations are going with the University.

The GEU’s contract expires in May and there has been little movement on the issues, Lloyd said. Among GEU’s issues are improved health care (they are excluded from our Coalition Health Care agreement), flexibility in tuition waivers, and wages that at least keep up with inflation.

“Ninety-three members in GEU had babies last year,” Lloyd said, “and they’re all on public assistance.”

GEU represents more than 1,300 teaching assistants working in over 70 departments at Michigan State University. They work between 10 and 30 hours a week teaching, grading and advising MSU undergraduate and graduate students. They teach more than a third of MSU classes and perform more than two thirds of the grading.

Membership continued on p. 4

Left: Union Representative Marie Hensley (right) brought two members from her district to the January Membership Meeting—Pat Chavez-Wilson and Linda Krause.

Far left: GEU Contract Administrator Jacqueline Lloyd tells CTs about the difficulty teaching assistants are having in negotiations with MSU and suggests ways we might be able to show support.

Center: CTU Treasurer Jeannine Lee updates members on our finances.

Right: New Audit Committee Member Susan Chalgian takes the oath of office after the Membership Meeting.
For sale:
◆ Electric Maytag extra large washer and dryer: $300.
Large dining room table: Dark wood with 6 chairs and one leaf, rectangle, $300. Please call 896-2027.
◆ Entertainment center: Hold dvd player and 3 other items, glass door, TV opening is 26½" wide by 24" tall, asking $20. Beautiful table lamp with cream shade: Retailed for $150, good condition, gold trim around decorative imprint, imprint is different shades of gold flowers with a dragonfly, 30½" tall, 17" wide shade, asking $35 or best offer. New etched mirror: Never put up, covered bridge in the left corner, retails for $100 without the imprint, unique mirror for any bathroom or bedroom, 30" wide by 23½" tall, asking $80 or best offer. Retired PartyLite La Rosetta wall sconce: Uses either votive or teals in its three attached holders, comes with three votive cups which can be removed when not in use, never used, measures @ 16" long, 8" wide, asking $10. Brown, metal wardrobe compartment: Metal rod holds all of your hanging clothes, shelf holds folded clothes, asking $20 or best offer. Deluxe DP 2000 weight machine: Asking $50. Pictures of all items available—email stunningtigress@yahoo.com.
◆ 2004 MINT Ford Ranger: Fx4, 4x4, 4 ltr. eng. just under 5,000 miles. $14,500 or BO. One owner, age 92, suffered a stroke and will no longer be able to drive. Call 231-879-3759 and ask for Larry.
◆ Blue Hot Wheels play table w/o the tracks: Has two large storage drawers (w/ wheels) under the table, like new, $75. Menards play workbench stand with cash register and tools: $20. Toddler Carseat: Back detaches from base to convert into a booster seat, great condition, $15. NordicTrack ski exercise machine: Listed on NT for $699, selling for $100. Step 2 kids/plastic video game rocking chair: $5. PS2 games: Please call for game list and prices, $5–$20. If interested, call after 5 pm: 517-282-4116.
◆ 400 lbs of Olympic weights: 2 full size bars, 2 curl bars, 1 flat bench, 1 press bench w/leg extension bar, $300. 6 pc beautiful solid oak entertainment center: Originally cost more than $22,000, will sell for $5,000. 2002 Harley Electra glide: Many
Bread & roses: We can do it! We are doing it!

By Deb Bittner

The February meeting of the Mid-Michigan Labor and Employment Relations Association (LERA) focused on women’s role in local labor history. I was honored to be asked to share the podium with three women labor leaders in the area to speak on “Bread and Roses: We can do it! We are doing it!” I took the opportunity to speak on how my union, the Clerical-Technical Union of MSU, embodies the “Bread and Roses” philosophy.

“We want bread, and roses too” was a slogan popularized by the 1912 strike against textile mills in Lawrence, Massachusetts. (The phrase probably originated earlier with the Chicago Women’s Trade Union League.) In response to pay cuts, 30,000 workers, mostly women, walked off the job for nine weeks in the midst of a harsh winter. [Mark Sellers]

A century later, we may avoid carbs and buy our own flowers, but the slogan of the women workers of the early twentieth century still rings true. It addresses the fact that our battle goes beyond wages and working conditions to address dignity and respect at work. Some of the issues for which the millworkers fought in 1912 were mirrored in the struggles of CTU when we bargained our very first contract in 1974 and our most recent one in 2007: We continue to argue about decent pay and dignity at work. In researching some of our history for my talk, I read about our bargaining concerns in our first years. The issues on the table included pay, health insurance, promotions and transfers, educational assistance, and (my favorite) space on bulletin boards around campus (which appears to have been a hotly contested topic).

Although today’s talk is about access to email instead of bulletin boards, we deal with many of the same issues. Work/life issues are still critical. We struggle to be properly compensated for our skills and contributions to MSU. We strive to provide for our families, care for the diverse needs of our children, partners and elders, and be treated with dignity and respect. All too frequently, compensation levels, flexibility for family needs, and a professional and supportive workplace depends on the luck of the draw, based largely on where an employee is lucky (or unlucky) enough to land on campus.

But, still, we are fortunate. In this state and at MSU, unions remain a strong force in helping women and men meet their family life and work life demands. As a labor union, we have a contract—the foundation from which we can address these issues and work to eliminate disparities.

Unions have been a driving force giving women a voice in the workplace, and this spills out into the community and society. For that we must thank those who have gone before. I know that I am very lucky to be involved with this Union and to follow in the footsteps of all the leaders, including the women, who came before me and continue to provide guidance.

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Something else for which to be grateful: A week ago, I slipped on the ice and broke my right wrist. Since I’m right-handed, just getting through my daily routine has become very difficult and tedious—everything from getting dressed to driving to using a computer mouse—and I expect to be saddled with a cast for four to six weeks. This experience has been a painful reminder of just how lucky we are to still have quality, affordable health care. It has also brought home to me just how dependent we are on each other to get the work done. No one does the work of the Union alone. I thank everyone for their patience and assistance in the weeks to come.

Union membership increases

Washington, DC- The Bureau of Labor Statistics released their annual union membership numbers, showing an overall increase of 311,000 union members in 2007, increasing union density from 12.0% to 12.1%.

While it may seem small, this is the largest increase in union membership since 1979.

Considering today’s tremendous corporate resistance and a National Labor Relations Board that appears to be working against unions, the increase is more impressive.

Over 201,000 women joined unions in 2007, nearly twice the number of men.
Michigan labor prevents anti-union petition drive

“I prefer to keep a higher standard in Michigan.”

That’s what CT Janet Roe-Darden wrote in her letter to the editor in the

Roe-Darden was one of several CTs who joined more than 3,500 union sup-
porters on February 15 in monitoring polling places statewide for a poten-
tial right-to-work (for less) petition drive. Dozens of unions participated in
the statewide mobilization, taking shifts morning, noon and night at 2,000 poll-
ing locations across the state, according the Michigan State AFL-CIO.

With the unprecedented mobilization of the Michigan union movement, the
right-to-work (for less), out-of-state special interests didn’t even show up.

In her letter to the editor, Roe Darden pointed out that right-to-
work (for less) would be bad for Michigan.

“Per capita income is $4,892 a year higher in non-right-to-work states,” she
said. “Unemployed workers in right-
to-work states are 17 percent less likely
to receive regular unemployment ben-
efits. Additionally, unemployed work-
ers receive 18 percent more in non-
right-to-work states; and the maximum
benefits are 35 percent higher. . . . Job
fatality rates are 54 percent higher in
right-to-work states. . . . Finally, more
patents are issued in non-right-to-work
states, showing more innovation.”

As American as apple pie?

In 1986 consumers won a court case requiring that companies that only add
water to a concentrate product must label the country of origin for the con-
centrate. But that label is often buried in fine print. Mott’s apple juice, for
instance, proclaims that it uses “our apples” that are “hand picked . . . put-
ting little between the orchards and
you, the way you trust us to.” In
smaller print elsewhere, you’ll find
“cones from China.”

. . . China is the top supplier of con-
centrate used for apple juice in the U.S.

According to the *Dallas Morning
News*, more than 40 percent of the
apple juice consumed in the United
States comes from concentrate
imported from China. Only 22 percent
of U.S. apple juice comes from domes-
tically produced apples.

In 1996, the United States imported 4.5
million gallons of apple juice concen-
trate from China. In 2006, that figure
had soared to 225.5 million gallons. . . .

—from Label Letter, *Vol. XXXIII,*
*No. 1, Jan./Feb. 2008*

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**Membership**

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Lloyd expressed gratitude for the en-
couragement GEU has received from
members of the MSU community and
asked for CTs’ help in upcoming cam-
paigns. [Angela Jernstadt]

In one campaign, friends were asked
to send cards that expressed support
for the TAs to members of the MSU
Board of Trustees on Valentine’s Day.
[Editor’s note: Many CTs partici-
pated in this activity. We will let you
know if GEU asks for our help in
future actions.]

**New leaders**

President Deb Bittner announced that
only one person, Susan Chalgian, had
stepped forward for the interim
position on the Audit Committee. The
position became available when Suzy
Peacock was appointed to the Execu-
tive Board on November 6, 2007.

Both Chalgian and Peacock will
remain in their positions until such
time as we have a quorum at a mem-
bership meeting or until the October
elections. [Toni Douglass]

**Other discussion**

Treasurer Jeannine Lee reported on our
finances and said that the 2007 audit
and 2008 budget will be presented at
the April 28 Membership Meeting.

Members discussed the writers’ strike
and the resulting positive union sent-
iment they have seen in the media lately.

Drawings of door prizes resulted in
several winners: Lillian Damer of the
Libraries and Jenn Woods of Engineer-
Computing Services each won $50;
Sandy Hatinger from Olin Health Cen-
ter won coffee and doughnuts; and
Lois Siefring of the MSU Health Team
won a gift card from Meijer.
Gas prices pump up carpooling

Inquiries about the availability of carpooling resources always soars when gas costs escalate sharply.

We responded to similar concerns in 2004 with a *CT News* article directing members to the Family Resource Center’s Commuter’s List, which helped MSU staff and faculty connect with other campus commuters.

Although the list was successful, according to Coordinator Laurie Strom, it was disbanded when CATA (Capital Area Transit Authority) began a more extensive program.

“Clean Commute Options” (also free) matches MSU employees and other community members who wish to share rides on a regular basis.

The CATA program finds carpool partners and discusses other options for getting to work while saving resources.

To access the program, fill out an application and fax or mail it to the CATA office. Your information is added to the Clean Commute Options database, and a match list is emailed or mailed if a potential ride match is found.

Contact CATA’s Clean Commute Program by calling the general telephone number 517-393-RIDE or emailing cleancommute@cata.org. Visit them at [http://www.cata.org/cleancommute](http://www.cata.org/cleancommute).

If you already participate in the Clean Commute Options Program at least three times a week, you may be eligible to sign up for their “Emergency Ride Home Program.”

Also, MSU has a deal for commuters to obtain a special parking permit. To purchase a Car Pool permit all parties in the car pool must come in to the Parking Office with their vehicle registrations. MSU will issue a validator system faculty/staff permit, and the cost of this will be divided equally among the members of the car pool. The cost cannot be payroll deducted. All members of the car pool must come prepared to pay their portion of the permit. There is a limit of four parties for each car pool permit. For more information on parking, please contact the Department of Police and Public Safety Parking Office at 517-355-8440.

Need help with taxes?

If you are part of the MSU community and meet any of the following criteria, then you are eligible for help from VITA, the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program.

If you make under $21,000 without any dependents, if you make under $31,000 with dependents, if you are over age 55, and if you need assistance with this year’s personal taxes, then you qualify for assistance from VITA. [Greg Kohuth]

The hours of the program are Tuesday 6:00-9:00 pm in 105 Bessey Hall, Wednesday 6:00-9:00 pm in 306 Bessey Hall and Thursday 6:00-9:00 pm in 13 Student Services. Pre-registration is required and can be done on their website: [www.vita.msu.edu](http://www.vita.msu.edu).

The website also contains information on what information to bring to your appointment as well as other resources in the community.

2008 Otilie Markholt labor scholarship

America *In Solidarity* is offering a minimum of $4,000 in scholarships to qualified high school seniors and current college students. At least one $1,000 grand prize scholarship will be given to a current high school senior and at least one $1,000 to a current college student. Total amounts given will be determined by the Scholarship Committee. AIS awarded $2,600 in scholarships in 2005 and $4,000 in 2006 and 2007. The scholarship is open to residents of the United States planning to attend accredited colleges and universities in the United States. Applicants must include an essay on ways to revitalize union organizing in America, the impact of recent free trade agreements on America’s working families, or how a union has benefited the student and/or the community.

For application information go to [www.americasolidarity.org/scholarships](http://www.americasolidarity.org/scholarships). The application deadline is April 1, 2008.
The following CTs have been appointed Union Representatives.

**District 11** (Plant Bio Lab, Pest Res, Bio Res, Food Safety & Toxicology): Jennifer Sysak can be contacted at 432-3100x102 or sysakjen@msu.edu.

**District 38** (Veterinary Medical Center): Contact Liz Owen at 432-6088 or owene@msu.edu.

**District 39** (Comm Arts): Pam Sloan can be contacted at 353-8670 or stahlp@msu.edu.

Interested in becoming a UR? Contact URCC Chairperson Colleen Drake (432-6123 x162 or drakec@msu.edu) or Vice President Nancy Gray (353-8632 or grayn@msu.edu).

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**Union training**

The Union Representative Coordinating Committee organizes a monthly training session that is open to URs, Executive Board members and the CTU staff.

January’s training focused on a review of the new Contract, the fine points of the grievance process, confidentiality issues and how to “Walk the talk” when representing the Union. Participants discussed these and other ways to best serve the membership.

Upcoming meetings will cover the Employee Assistance Program, health and safety issues and labor history.

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**Classifieds**

continued from p. 2

accessories, 19,000 miles, sacrifice for $13,500. Please call 517-285-2578.

**Home theater speakers:** Infinity Systems Compositions Overture 1 (OVTR1) 3-way, full range bookshelf style. Excellent condition. One pair of main speakers with stands and one center channel speaker (all are OVTR1). Each speaker has its own powered subwoofer. Frequency range: 35 Hz–20,000 Hz. Each speaker has one 8” woofer, two 4” mid-range drivers, and one 1” tweeter. Magnetically shielded. Excellent for both movies and music. Sold as a unit (three speakers plus two stands, manual included) for $600 or best offer. Call 517-882-1841 or email wulfus@excite.com for more information and/or to schedule a time to audition the speakers before purchase.

**Oldsmobile Cutlass Sierra S:** Features 3.1L V6 with 97K mi, power locks, power windows, power seats and CD/MP3 Player with IPOD connection. Very reliable car! Cost is $1,400. Call: 517-663-5528.

**2002 Chevy Venture LS van:** Extended, 5-door, 8 passenger, bronze color, new tires and battery, well maintained, excellent condition, 100,000 hwy miles; $6,900 OBO. Call 517-281-6968.

**6 acres on Drummond Island, MI:** 247.5’ x 1155’. Easily accessible and close to State land, trails and public sand beach. Great potential for building a cabin or year-round home. Private with pine trees. $24,900. Possible land contract terms. 517-290-2058 after 5 pm or email kmoser_2001@yahoo.com.

**For rent:**

**New 4 bedroom cottage on Lake Missaukee:** Home has 2 car garage, dock, plenty of space and 14 ft fishing boat with trolling motor and gas motor, minutes from shopping and boat launch. Great all sport lake. $800 per week. July 4th week not included. Please call 517-285-2578.

**Log cottage on the sandy beach of Lake Huron:** Located in protected Mackinaw Bay on the southeast side of Drummond Island. If reading by the crackling fire and listening to the waves from your bed sounds interesting to you, we think that you will love this cottage. $750 weekly May-Nov. Phone 517-290-2058 after 5 pm. Email kmoser_2001@yahoo.com.

**Room for rent:** I am an employee (CTU) and a student at MSU. I recently bought a house in East Lansing and am looking for a room mate. The house is within walking distance anywhere on campus. The room is the entire second floor with lots of storage and a half bath. It includes basic utilities and use of the rest of the house including laundry. I am pet friendly with two dogs and one old cat. I am asking $500/mo. but have some room to negotiate. If interested call 517-256-5875.

**Services:**

**Tax season special:** Liberty Tax of Frandor, 407 N. Clippert St. is offering a great deal on your income tax preparation. We will beat any other agency’s fees. Just mention that you saw the add in the CT News to get your discount! Ask for Tami Varriechio when calling for appointments at 517-324-7040. WE WANT YOU!!

**Free:**

**Advertise to your colleagues in the CT News.** Contact Cheryllie Finney at ctnews@msu.edu. The CT News accepts ads from CTs on items for sale and/or services provided by CTs and/or their household family members.
**Update:**

**You can quit! U can help!**

Want to quit smoking, but not sure you can? There is a lot of help available to you at MSU, including a new pilot program that combines the medication CHANTIX with medical evaluation and monitoring as well as structured behavioral support.

The initial program started in February, but you can still sign up for sessions that begin May 21 and September 8.

The Michigan State University CHANTIX Pilot Project is seeking MSU faculty, academic and support staff and benefits-eligible dependents to participate in this new evidence-based tobacco cessation program.

Participants pay $200 for the program, which partially supports the cost of a three-month CHANTIX prescription, medical monitoring appointments and behavioral support sessions. Pilot program sponsoring organizations are covering the remaining costs of the program in order to allow participants to access services and supplies at a greatly reduced cost.

The CHANTIX Pilot Program is being offered through a partnership between Human Resources, Olin Health Center and the Office of the University Physician-Health4U Program. If interested, visit MSU’s CHANTIX website at [http://health4u.msu.edu/msuchantix.htm](http://health4u.msu.edu/msuchantix.htm).

If you aren’t interested in participating in the pilot program but still want to quit, MSU offers a variety of other programs and resources to help you through the MSU U Can Quit-We Can Help program. Visit the program’s web site at [www.ucanquit.msu.edu](http://www.ucanquit.msu.edu) to learn about one-on-one coaching, the online QuitNet program, support groups, workshops and more or call the Health4U Program at 517-353-2596.

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**Quote:** “Once social change begins, it cannot be reversed. You cannot uneducate the person who has learned to read. You cannot humiliate the person who feels pride. And you cannot oppress the people who are not afraid anymore.”

—César Chávez, President of the United Farm Workers
Calendar

Now through August 24 “The Federal Art Project: Supporting Good Artists in Bad Times,” an exhibit in the Heritage Gallery of the MSU Museum. Among the many projects to come out of the Great Depression and President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s New Deal government programs to combat massive unemployment are those that dealt with the arts, architecture and crafts of American workers. Michigan State University Museum presents an exhibition of pieces from public work projects in Michigan and on the Michigan State College campus during the 1930s and early ’40s.

March 4 CTU Executive Board Meeting, 5:15 pm, C-T Union Hall. All members welcome.

March 8 CTU Game night, 7–11 pm, C-T Union Hall. This is an adults-only evening. No alcohol.


March 17 Deadline to submit items for the April CT News. Send letters, articles and other information to ctnews@msu.edu.

March 17 Deadline to register for the Gerry Olson Educational Lottery Loan. See ad on this page.

March 18 CTU Executive Board Meeting, 5:15 pm, C-T Union Hall. All members welcome.

March 19 Caregivers Together Support Group. Presented by Jonathon Novello, MSU Employee Assistance Program, and Lori Strom, MSU Family Resource Center. C303 Snyder Hall, 12:10–12:50 pm. Caring for a loved one with a chronic or debilitating condition is a reality that many of us now face. While this can be a rewarding experience, it can also be difficult at times. Frequently, the mental and physical health of those providing the care is impacted by the long hours and emotional strain that such care often requires. Caregivers Together is an ongoing support group designed to provide a range of supportive services to MSU employees who provide care to those they love. [Jacqueline Neveau]